

HISTORY OF USS WICKES (DD 578)

This destroyer is the second ship of the United States Navy to bear the name; the first WICKES was a World War I destroyer.

USS WICKES (DD 578), named in honor of Captain Lambert Wickes, USN, was launched on 13 September 1942 with Miss Catherine Young Wickes, his great grand-niece, acting as sponsor. Upon the vessel's commissioning at Orange, Texas, on 16 June 1943, Lt. Commander W.Y. Allen, USN, assumed command.

There followed the customary shakedown cruise, held in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and a subsequent post-shakedown availability at Charleston, South Carolina.

With the period of testing and readying at an end, the new destroyer sailed for Pearl Harbor, via the Panama Canal and San Diego, in company with USS CABOT (CVL 28) and the destroyer BELL.

Arrival at our most formidable Pacific base was made on 27 November 1943, and the following several weeks were spent in the conducting of anti-submarine and anti-aircraft exercises in that vicinity, with occasional screening duties in connection with task groups returning to Pearl Harbor from the Gilbert Island operation operations. At length, WICKES received the orders for which her crew had been so eagerly awaiting and she sailed out to the frigid waters of the North Pacific in company with the destroyers BADGER and ISHERWOOD.

The tour of duty in the Aleutians was generally dull and uneventful, the greatest battles being fought against the elements and the dreary monotony of Aleutian duty. The North Pacific, with its blasts that sometimes reach velocities well above 100 knots and which roll up unbelievably gigantic seas of 50 to 70 feet from trough to crest, was the global war's most rugged theatre, from the climatic standpoint, and was a proving ground for both ships and men.

WICKES' initial contact with the enemy was made while she was a member of Task Force 94 in a bombardment against Kurabuzaki on the southern tip of Paramushiro Island on 4 February 1944. There was much satisfaction among the crew upon the successful completion of this first combat operation.

With USS RICHMOND as lead ship, WICKES' Task Force 94 was credited with making the first penetration of the Okhotsk Sea during the war by Naval surface units. This incursion into waters which were in Japan's own "back yard" and under the exclusive control of Japanese warships and land-based aircraft was accomplished 4

4 March 1944. A terrific storm which broke over the small task force immediately after it had entered the Okhotsk Sea resulted in an interruption in Jap shipping and the group found no prey. The water temperature was exactly freezing and large floes of "slush ice" were passed frequently. Another bombardment of Paramushiro in the Kuriles was to have climaxed this search for enemy commercial craft but the unfavorable weather made it, also, impossible.

Further blasting at Matsuwa and Paramushiro at the end of June provided some change in the tiresome routine of North Pacific patrol for WICKES.

On 25 July, Lt. Commander J.B. Cresap, USN, relieved Commander Allen of command of USS WICKES at Massacre Bay, Attu.

With the month of August and a final raid on Matsuwa, the destroyer's North Pacific duty was terminated and she happily set out for San Francisco, California, arriving completely thawed on 16 August.

After a week and a half of minor repairs and a well earned rest for her officers and men, WICKES set out for Pearl Harbor and arrived 31 August 1944, not the "green" destroyer she was when she had first steamed into that harbor almost a year before, but a veteran "tin can" with an eight months tour of duty in the most miserable sector of the Pacific theatre tucked under her bowline.

Her crew knew that she was being prepared for something big due to the installation of new radio gear and the subsequent landing force exercises at Lahaina in the Pearl Harbor area. She sped to Manus Island in the Admiralties on 15 September where she conducted further exercises in gunnery and landing operations and also acquired a fighter director team to man the radio equipment. Thus, WICKES was established as a full fledged fighter director ship.

She proceeded as escort to Task Group 79.4 to the Leyte invasion on 14 October 1944. The invasion proceeded successfully and WICKES assumed radar picket duties upon arrival in Leyte Gulf. She was in a position to observe the Battle of the Surigao Strait in the early morning hours of 25 October but did not participate in the engagement. The vessel was relieved of radar picket duty 3 weeks after her arrival in Leyte Gulf and her assignments throughout the remainder of 1944 consisted, for the most part, of escort screening of vitally required Allied convoys around the islands of New Guinea, Manus and Noemfoor.

With the beginning of the new year, she resumed fighter director duties to help cover the assault on Lingayen Gulf, Luzon Island; the Combat Air Patrol under her guidance destroyed four enemy planes on 8 January 1945. During the next few weeks, WICKES supported landings on San Felipe, Zambales Province, Grande Island in Subic Bay, and the paratroop landings on historical Corregidor Island in Manila Bay.

WICKES had been in on this tremendous operation of puncturing holes throughout the entire Philippine Archipelago since the first invasion at Leyte, and had watched it grow until it had struck at the very heart of the Jap-held islands, Manila. The ship's gunfire had proved accurate and effective in silencing enemy shore batteries during the invasions in which she took part, and her direction of Combat Air Patrol was such that those on the beaches were often saved from being chewed to pieces by hordes of enemy aircraft. Her crew was proud of having really accomplished a job after the many months of comparative inactivity in the desolate northern Pacific.

After brief refresher exercises in landing operations and fighter director duties in the only recently friendly Leyte Gulf, WICKES sailed on 19 March as a member of Combat Destroyer Division 98 for the invasion of Okinawa Jima.

The destroyer acted as fire support vessel during the initial landing and then took her place as fighter director ship on 28 March. For the next 51 days, she remained on her tour of duty in the Okinawa area where she - took enemy aircraft under fire on fourteen different occasions and is credited with destroying five; was the direct object of attack by Kamikaze planes on four different occasions, all of which missed; fired on a Jap plane in the midst of his dive on the hospital ship RELIEF; and rescued six men from the turbulent waters around Okinawa. Combat Air Patrols under her able direction sent 42 Nipponese aircraft spinning to a watery grave and sent four home damaged. The biggest kill was made in the late afternoon of 22 April while on picket station about 70 miles northwest of Okinawa when marine pilots from Yontan Field were vectored to a large raid approaching from the north and succeeded in knocking 26 Japs out of the sky.

The activities of USS WICKES in this area has since resulted in her being awarded the Navy Unit Commendation, the text of which reads in part as follows:

"For outstanding heroism in action.....during the Okinawa campaign, March 27 to May 15, 1945... A gallant fighting ship, the WICKES, her men withstood the stress and perils of vital Radar Picket duty, achieving a distinctive combat record which attests the teamwork, courage and skill of her entire company and enhances the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

WICKES was granted availability at Ulithi Atoll in the Western Caroline Islands, where she arrived on 21 May. She then returned to the Okinawa theatre for a few days in June and joined a slow-moving convoy as escort, which convoy was moving from Okinawa to Pearl Harbor via Saipan.

WICKES' war days were over although her crew did not realized that they had seen the Japanese as an enemy for the last time. At Pearl Harbor, she pointed her bow eastward and sailed, together with three other destroyers, for the Golden Gate and home. The end of the war found her undergoing an overhaul at the U.S. Naval Drydocks, Hunter's Point, San Francisco. WICKES is now (November 1946) out of commission in reserve at San Diego, California.

USS WICKES earned five Battle Stars on the Asiatic-Pacific Area Service Medal for participating in the following operations:

- 1 Star/Kurile Islands Operation
 - Massashi-Wan-Kurabu-Zaki -- 4 February 1944
 - Matsuwa -- 13 June 1944
 - Kurabu Zaki -- 26 June 1944
- 1 Star/Leyte Operation
 - Leyte Landings -- 10 October to 29 November 1944
- 1 Star/Luzon Operation
 - Lingayen Gulf Landing -- 4-18 January 1945
- 1 Star/Okinawa Gunto Operation
 - Assault and Occupation of Okinawa Gunto -- 24 March to 30 June 1945
- 1 Star/Manila Bay-Bicol Operations
 - Mariveles-Corregidor -- 14 to 28 February 1945

STATISTICS

DISPLACEMENT	2,050 tons
LENGTH OVERALL	376 ft. . . .
BEAM	39 ft. . . .
SPEED	35 knots plus
COMPLEMENT	300 men plus
ARMAMENT	Five 5-inch 38 caliber dual purpose guns, ten 21-inch torpedo tubes, plus smaller Anti-aircraft guns.

Stencilled --11-15-46
Restencilled--9-17-51

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ HISTORY OF U.S.S. WICKES

JUNE 16 - NOVEMBER 22, 1943

Built by the Consolidated Steel Corporation, the WICKES was placed in commission at Orange, Texas, on 16 June 1943, W. Y. ALLEN, Jr., Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy, Commanding Officer. After an eighteen day fitting out period, the ship got underway and ~~brief stops were made at Galveston, Texas, and New Orleans, Louisiana, to accomplish dry-docking, de-gaussing and deperming prior to shaking down.~~

The WICKES departed from New Orleans on 13 July and arrived in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on 16 July. The period from this date to 11 August was devoted to shakedown cruising.

Charleston, S.C., was designated as the home yard and the ship arrived there on 14 August for post-shakedown availability.

~~From 1 September to 6 November the ship's activities were as follows: Two escort trips to Trinidad with training exercises held while enroute and while at Trinidad; a training period at Casco Bay, Portland, Maine; providing escort for the PRAIRIE (AD 15) when she left Argentia, Newfoundland, and brief stops at the Boston and Norfolk Navy Yards for emergency repairs.~~

The final stop prior to departure for the Panama Canal was made at the Boston Navy Yard. On 6 November the WICKES got underway in company with CABOT (CVL 28) and BELL (DD 587) ~~and arrived at the Canal on 12 November. Passage through the canal was made on the night of the 12th, and the ship departed for San Diego on 15 November, arriving there on 22 November.~~

Via San Diego Panama Canal
Enroute from San Diego to Pearl Harbor in company with CABOT and BELL 23-27 November. A speed of 25 knots was maintained throughout the trip. 28 November - 9 December. This period was spent in Pearl Harbor and vicinity. Anti-submarine and anti-aircraft exercises were conducted. On several occasions WICKES was ordered to rendezvous with and augment the screen of various task groups returning to Pearl Harbor from the Gilbert Island Operations. *San Diego*

The ship was dry-docked once for minor repairs to the sound dome.

HISTORY OF U.S.S. WICKES

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DECEMBER 10-17, 1943

Enroute to Adak, Alaska, Aleutian Islands, in company with the BADGER (DD 657) and ISHERWOOD (DD 520).

DECEMBER 17, 1943 - AUGUST 7, 1944

The tour of duty in the Aleutians was generally dull and uneventful. (The greatest battles fought were against the elements and the dreary monotony of Aleutian duty.)

However, inasmuch as all the ships of DesRon-49 were present, many extremely valuable training exercises were held, weather permitting. Weather usually prevented AA exercises.

2. The monotonous routine was alleviated to a great extent by three bombardments conducted by Task Force 94 against the Kurile Islands, Paramushiro and Matsuwa. The first raid on Paramushiro on 4 February marked the birthday of the WICKES as far as actual contact with the enemy was concerned and a great deal of satisfaction was felt upon the successful completion of this operation. WICKES specific assignment was bombardment of Kurabuzaki, Southern tip of Paramushiro. This bombardment is described in WICKES action report, Serial 001 of 5 February 1944.

3. An uneventful, though rather exciting sweep for enemy shipping through Japan's back yard in the Sea of Okhotsk was conducted by Task Force 94 on March 4th. Another bombardment of Paramushiro was to have climaxed this search but unfavorable weather made this impossible.

4. The bombardments of Matsuwa on June 13, and Paramushiro June 26 were unique in that both actions were carried out under the difficult conditions of darkness and fog. WICKES assignment consisted of bombarding miscellaneous shore installations. Action reports covering these bombardments are DD578 Serial 003 of 18 June 1944, and DD578 Serial 004 of 28 June 1944.

5. Lieutenant Commander J. B. CRESAP, U.S.N. relieved Commander W. Y. ALLEN, Jr., U.S.N. as Commanding Officer on 25 July, at Massacre Bay, Attu.

6. On August 2nd while Task Force 94 was enroute to conduct another bombardment of Matsuwa, visual contact was made with a snoopier Betty. The Betty was taken under fire by WICKES in van picket station but escaped in the fog. This was the WICKES' first anti-aircraft action. The contact by the enemy plane plus improving weather nullified the chances of making an undetected approach on Matsuwa, and the bombardment was cancelled.

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Throughout the entire ~~Alaskan~~ tour, numerous searches were made for reported subs, but no definite contacts were ever made.

7. On 7 August, the WICKES very happily got underway from Adak and set a course for San Francisco, California in company with several other ships of DesRon-49, and arrived on 16 August.

AUGUST 16-25 - 1944

Moored in San Francisco at Pier 36; minor repairs accomplished by Matson Navigation Company under Assistant Industrial Manager, Navy Yard, Mare Island. This period was primarily devoted to allowing the crew and officers as much leave and liberty as possible consistent with the short time available. Dazzle camouflage paint job was applied.

AUGUST 26-31

Enroute to Pearl Harbor in company with DesRon-49 ~~less~~ KIMBERLY, YOUNG and Wm. D. PORTER.

SEPTEMBER 1-14

This period spent in Pearl Harbor and vicinity. Engaged in landing force exercises at Lahaina in preparation for forthcoming operations. Additional radio gear was installed ~~to the~~ ~~WICKES~~ in order to outfit the WICKES for fighter director duties.

SEPTEMBER 15 - OCTOBER 14

Departed Pearl Harbor 15 September with Task Group 33.2, the Yap Attack Group. Arrived Eniwetok on 25 September and spent 26th and 27th anchored in the lagoon replenishing fuel and provisions. Proceeded from Eniwetok on 28 September for Manus, Admiralty Islands, arriving there on 3 October. Ship crossed equator for first time at 2200 on 1 October in Longitude 153-52 east. As plans for the capture and occupation of Yap were changed WICKES and the accompanying task group became a part of the 7th Fleet and made preparations for the Leyte Operation, remaining at Manus until 14 October. Conducted general upkeep and engaged in gunnery and ASW exercises for two days during this period. Fighter director team came aboard prior departure.

OCTOBER 14-25

Enroute to Leyte Island, Philippines, 14-20 October, acting as screening unit of Transport Group Baker, Task Group 79.4. This passage was uneventful and all ships in this group

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OCTOBER 14-25 - 1944 (cont'd)

arrived in Leyte Gulf on the morning of 20 October according to plan. WICKES proceeded to assigned radar picket station near the center of the gulf and assumed duties as a picket and fighter director ship. The ship remained on this station continuously until daylight the morning of 25 October. Enemy aircraft were frequently seen in the distance, particularly toward the transport area and landing beaches but none came very close. One good sound contact was made about noon on 22 October and an eleven charge pattern was dropped but no results were observed and no contact was made after further search.

The Battle of Surigao Strait was observed in the early morning hours of 25 October while still on this station but the WICKES did not take part. It is no exaggeration to state that this engagement was exciting even from a distance. Fighter director activities while at Leyte were largely limited to assistance in evaluating the air situation, as control of a CAP was taken only on first two days. CAP shot down one "Kate" during the first afternoon. Action report serial 060 of 3 November covers this operation.

OCTOBER 26 - NOVEMBER 4

Departed Leyte Gulf, acting as screen commander for Task Unit 79.14.9 which was composed of about 12 ISTs. Proceeded to Humboldt Bay, Hollandia, New Guinea, arriving without incident on 1 November. Remained at anchor through the 4th.

NOVEMBER 5 - 24

Operations during this period consisted of screening a transport group during all phases of a replenishment run to Leyte. Transports and AKs of Task Group 79.15 were escorted to Noemfoor Island and screened during loading operations there and then escorted to Leyte where unloading was accomplished in one day (18 November). Then the auxiliaries were escorted back to Seeadler Harbor, Manus. WICKES made no direct enemy contact during this time although Jap planes were over parts of the transport area while at Leyte.

NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 26

At anchor in Seeadler Harbor 25, 26 and 27 November. On 28 November took departure for Torokina, Bougainville, escorting ships of TransDiv 38. Stepped for transport loading activities at Finschafen, New Guinea, on 29th, arriving at Torokina 1 December. WICKES remained at Torokina, Empress Augusta Bay,

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NOVEMBER 25 - DECEMBER 26 (cont'd)

until 15 December, patrolling at the outskirts of the bay in company with other units of DesRon 49. The return trip to Manus was begun on 16 December with a stopover at Huon Gulf for a landing exercise rehearsal in preparation for the next operation. Arrived Manus 21 December and remained at anchor, replenishing logistics until the 27th.

DECEMBER 27, 1944 - JANUARY 12, 1945

Through the above inclusive dates WICKES took part in the assault on Lingayen Gulf, Luzon Island, including the passage to the Gulf from Manus and the return trip to Leyte. On the approach the ship was a part of Task Unit 79.11.3, screening Tractor Groups Able and Baker of Task Force 79. A new fighter director team including one Army 2nd Lieutenant came aboard prior departure from Manus. The northbound run was relatively uneventful, except for a moderate amount of heckling by enemy aircraft both day and night after entering Philippine waters. CAP under WICKES' control splashed 4 Tojos off Luzon on the morning of 8 January but the ship did not fire at any planes until after entering Lingayen Gulf the next morning when two planes which came over the transport area were taken under fire. Departed the same evening (9 January) escorting unloaded ships back to Leyte Gulf after lying to in AA screen all day. About one-half hour before sunrise the following morning a single engined Jap fighter dove on the WICKES and dropped a small bomb which exploded in the water very close to the starboard side amidships, fragments wounding 15 men and puncturing the top side with a few small holes. Arrived Leyte on 12 January. The Lingayen Operation is covered by action reports serial 02 of 12 January and 06 of 15 January.

JANUARY 13 - FEBRUARY 16

Operated as anti-sub patrol in Leyte Gulf most of the time from 13 to 25 January, inclusive. On 26 January sortied with ships of T.G. 78.3 and took station as an escort and F.D. ship for the passage through Mindanao and Sulu Seas enroute to Luzon for landings on the west coast in the vicinity of San Felipe, Zambales Province. This was designated the Mike-Xray Operation. The passage was without incident and landings were made on the morning of 29 January without opposition and no bombardment. Friendly natives came out to greet our forces in bancas and other craft. WICKES supported landings on Grande Island, Subic Bay, again without opposition, on the 30th and for the next two-week period took part in miscellaneous activities around southwestern Luzon, basing on Subic Bay. Made one short run to San Jose, Mindoro, escorting

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JANUARY 13 - FEBRUARY 16 (cont'd)

landing craft convoys both ways. The Mike-Xray Operation is reported in serial 011 of 1 February and the Grande Island landings in serial 010 of 31 January.

Detailed plans and other preparations were being made at this time for the assault on Bataan and Corregidor and operations began in earnest on 13 February when minesweeping commenced. WICKES joined YOUNG (DD580) in support of the minesweepers off Manila Bay about sunset on the 13th, retired with them that night and resumed activities on the morning of 14th, working up into an area between Corregidor and Carabao Islands. When the sweeps were taken under fire by Jap shore batteries on Corregidor, Caballo and Carabao Islands, WICKES together with YOUNG opened up with vigorous counter-battery fire and succeeded in knocking out or silencing all batteries. Other destroyers and two cruisers joined in this counter-fire and no claim is made by WICKES to have done the job singlehanded, but it is certain that this ship's gunfire was accurate and effective and contributed materially toward the successful result and the protection of the minesweepers who were enabled to proceed with their task unmolested for the remainder of the day. Both WICKES and YOUNG were taken under fire and had some very close shaves but neither vessel was hit.

On the morning of 15 February WICKES carried out a scheduled bombardment against the beaches in Mariveles Harbor just prior to the landings and stood by to render gunfire support for the troops after they had gone ashore. No opposition developed, however, and the ship took up A/S patrol duties in the afternoon. Corregidor was blasted throughout the day by other destroyers and cruisers of the 7th Fleet and by the air forces.

Between 0400 and daylight on the 16th steamed around in company with PICKING and YOUNG to intercept suicide boats which had penetrated Mariveles Harbor, but no contacts were made, except visual contact with many drifting mines which revealed themselves, came the dawn. Exploded one mine and was proceeding to sink others when relieved by sweeps which took over the job. WICKES then proceeded to conduct another scheduled bombardment, this time against the landing beaches on the south side of Corregidor. Paratroopers had landed on top of the island just prior to this. Relatively light fire developed from caves on Corregidor and Caballo when the troops commenced the landings and WICKES replied with counter-battery against Caballo and then maneuvered to keep the north side of Caballo covered for the rest of the day. With PICKING and

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JANUARY 13 - FEBRUARY 16, 1945 (cont'd.)

YOUNG, the ship was detached from this duty in the late afternoon and the three ships in company took departure for Leyte, completing duty with the 7th Fleet. By all standards, this operation was the most interesting one the WICKES ever took part in, affording an opportunity to observe closely the activities of many other units of our forces such as paratroops, minesweepers, heavy bombers, ground troops etc. In addition, the ship's own activities were very interesting and all hands felt that at last the WICKES had produced some results and definitely accomplished something after months of more or less routine duties. Fire from the enemy shore batteries added just the right amount of hazard and provided the first real test of the ship under fire. Lack of definite air opposition throughout these operations simplified life greatly and largely confined fighter director activities to a constant check up on the air situation, although there were numerous false alarms. The Bataan-Corregidor operation is covered by Serial 015 of 19 February 1945.

FEBRUARY 17 - MARCH 12

Arrived Leyte Gulf 18 February and remained there for upkeep with 4 days tender assistance until the 2nd of March. On 19 February WICKES plus all other destroyers of DesRon-49 less YOUNG reported to Com Fifth Fleet for duty. In company with LUCE (DD 522) and C.J. BADGER (DD 657) escorted PORTLAND and MINNEAPOLIS to Ulithi, Western Caroline Islands, departing Leyte on 2 March and returning on 10 March.

MARCH 13 - MAY 15 (The Okinawa Operation)

WICKES participated in the rehearsal for the Okinawa Operation in the Leyte Gulf area during the period 13-16 March. Activities on those days consisted of duty in Tractor Group George (TG 51.7) screen, fire support drills, and anti-submarine patrol around the transport area.

After replenishing fuel, ammunition and provisions and having visual fighter director equipment installed on 17-18 March, took departure for Okinawa on 19 March with TG 51.7. ComDesDiv-98 acting as CTU 51.7.8 (Commander Screen) transferred to WICKES for the rehearsal and for this passage to the objective. A new fighter director team came aboard just prior departure from Leyte. It was a difficult trip for the landing craft because of rough seas.

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MARCH 13 - MAY 15 (cont'd.)

Upon arrival at Okinawa on 26 March WICKES acted as a fire support vessel supporting landings by scheduled bombardment on Yakabi Shima, Kerama Retto. There was no opposition on that island requiring additional naval gunfire. Commencing 28 March and continuously until 4 May without interruption except to fuel, WICKES had radar picket and fighter director duties on the various picket stations around Okinawa. During this period Combat Air Patrols under the able direction of Lieut.(jg) James R. BAUMGARTNER, (A)F, USNR, senior fighter director officer shot down 42 enemy aircraft, probably destroyed 8 and damaged 4. The biggest kill was made in the late afternoon of 22 April while on picket station 14 about 70 miles northwest of Okinawa when marine pilots from Yontan Field were vectored to a large raid approaching from the north and succeeded in knocking down 26 Japs, probably splashing 2 more and damaging 4. On the 4th of May the fighter director team was transferred to the GAINARD (DD 706). From that date until 15 May WICKES was assigned duty in the transport AA screen off Hagushi Beach, anti-submarine patrol, supervised underway fueling operations one day and was granted 3 days availability at anchor for boiler cleaning.

During this 51 day tour of duty in the Okinawa area the WICKES took enemy aircraft under fire on fourteen different occasions and four times was the direct object of attack by Kamikaze planes, all of which missed, although pieces of 2 of them landed on the fantail. The ship's own gunfire is credited with 5 planes shot down and one probably destroyed. One of the Kamikazes tried to torpedo the ship first but the fish also missed, and on another occasion WICKES fired on a Jap diving on the hospital ship RELIEF (AH 1). The ship patrolled on assigned picket stations alone without support until 10 April; from then on landing craft and sometimes another DD were always present. Incidental items were rescuing 5 enlisted men found drifting on a raft from the DICKERSON (APD 21), picking up one crashed fighter pilot from the BENNINGTON (CV 20) and exploding one drifting mine. The ship was not damaged and the only casualties were 3 men slightly wounded by a plane which strafed. Serial 030 of 20 May is the action report for the Okinawa Operation.

On 15 May WICKES departed for Ulithi in company with and screening a convoy of merchant and naval auxiliaries.

MAY 16 - JUNE 7, 1945

Arrived Ulithi 21 May and remained until 7 June, having 10 days tender availability alongside the PRAIRIE during this

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MAY 16 - JUNE 7, 1945 (cont'd.)

period. The time spent at Ulithi was a welcome rest. Although all hands had gained a great deal of confidence in our ability to handle air attacks, it was difficult, after more than a month of picket duty, not to feel like fugitives from the law of averages, as so many other ships had been hit.

JUNE 7-22

Departed Ulithi for Okinawa on 7 June with another slow convoy (WICKES screen commander) and arrived there on the 13th. After taking aboard a new fighter director team, the ship was again assigned picket and fighter director duties for a few days, during which most of the enemy air activity was at night. Had 2 or 3 other destroyers in support on this job.

JUNE 23 - JULY 14

On 23 June again departed Okinawa with a slow convoy headed for Saipan, and with further orders to proceed to Pearl Harbor. ComDesRon-49 in PICKING was Commander Screen and was the only other member of the squadron present. Arrived Saipan on 29 June and departed the same day with PICKING and HALL (DD 583) eastward bound for Pearl, via Eniwetok where the ships refueled and SPROSTON (DD 577) joined the group. Arrived Pearl Harbor on 7 July and on the 8th the WICKES, for the second time in her career, very happily pointed her bow toward the golden gate with orders for a routine 47 day overhaul at the U.S. Naval Drydocks, Hunter's Point, San Francisco. The last leg of the journey was made in company with PICKING, SPROSTON and BRACKETT (DE 41). All ships arrived the morning of 14 July and proceeded to the Naval Ammunition Depot at Mare Island to unload ammunition. Upon completion of that task WICKES got underway for Hunter's Point, tying up alongside about sunset.

JULY 15 - SEPTEMBER 25

Within a day or two after arrival Destroyer Squadron 49 was dissolved and the WICKES was reassigned to DesRon-58. As the war ended before completion of the scheduled overhaul, some additional time became necessary and the completion date was consequently extended from 25 to 31 August. WICKES reloaded ammunition, conducted full power trial and various calibrations during the following week and on 7 September departed for San Diego to participate in refresher training exercises.

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JULY 15 - SEPTEMBER 25 (cont'd.)

A regular refresher shakedown schedule was commenced on Monday 10 September and all scheduled exercises were completed through the 14th. Further training was cancelled and the ship was directed to report to the Commandant Eleventh Naval District for placing in Reserve. As this goes to print the U.S.S. WICKES (DD578) is tied up in a nest with other destroyers at the Naval Repair Base, San Diego, California, as a unit of the San Diego Group, Pacific Reserve Fleet. Having completed an honorable and active career of 2 years and 3 months she is now preparing for what will probably be a long rest.

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